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Atari Online News, Etc.
A-ONE Online Magazine
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A-ONE #1036 09/05/08

~ Web Traffic Is Growing ~ People Are Talking! ~ ACEC Getting Near!
~ Google Reigning at 10! ~ US Xbox 360 Price Cut! ~ Sony Recalls Vaios!
~ Hyped Spore Here Soon! ~ Google Apps Gets Video ~ ACEC Traffic News!

-* Dell To Unveil Mini-Notebook *-
-* Google Adds Chrome Browser to Line! *-
-* Comcast Appeals FCC Web-Tracking Decision! *-

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->From the Editor’s Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

Awright!! Well, I get to play a bachelor for a week! My wife and her mother left today for a cruise up the Northeast coast, so it’s just me and the canine kids. We both haven’t had a real vacation, so when the opportunity came for her, it was a no-brainer for her to jump at it. Hopefully the hurricanes that are on their way in our direction won’t dampen the trip too much. I figure that they’ll run into the storm during their bus ride to New York to catch the ship, and maybe a little on the first leg of the voyage. I hope that they have a great time!

Well, as I’m sure that Joe has likely mentioned, the presidential conventions are over, finally. I saw a little bit of them both, and came away feeling about the same as before they started. Now the real fun will start, and last for a couple of months. I don’t think that there’s much that can be said at this point to sway me, but I’ve decided to keep an open mind. I have a candidate in mind, and we’ll see what happens.

So, as we wait for Hurricanes Hannah and Ike to bear down on us, as tropical storms hopefully, let’s roll into this week’s issue!

Until next time...

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ACEC Swap Meet

ACEC Swap Meet September 13, 2008

ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS
OF COLUMBUS, OHIO
VINTAGE COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAME SWAP MEET

September 13, 2008
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. EDT
Oakland Park Community Center
980 Lenore St.

All vintage and classic computers, video games, systems, accessories, games, and software invited!

Vendor and Flea Marketeer donation: Free!
Shoppers and onlookers donation: Free!

Further info:
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http://www.angelfire.com/oh4/acec/acec.html

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This is an update from the folks running the ACEC Swap Meet:

Hi folks, I wanted to step in here and give you folks a quick update on the ACEC Vintage Computer and Video Game Swap Meet being held on Saturday 09-13-08 from 9 am to 3 pm in Columbus Ohio. I found out that the westbound lane of Cooke Rd has been closed for construction between Maize Rd. and I-71. I don't know if this effects the eastbound lane or not. There may be some construction delays. I would suggest that anybody going to the swap meet use the E. N. Broadway exit of I-71. Please see our website at acec.atari.org. for more information about the ACEC Vintage Computer and Video Game Swap Meet. Or you can email me at colonel_charles@yahoo.com. We are still taking reservations for vendor tables. Also remember that it is FREE!!!! FREE!!! FREE!!!!. Hope to see you there!

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Another week has come and gone, and we're now, at least unofficially, done with summer.

And every four years, when summer comes to an end, you can count on the political conventions. I must be getting old, because nothing really surprises me anymore. The democrats picked a black man. Uh huh. The republicans picked a woman. Yep. Both of these things, I took in stride, although I must admit that I AM a little surprised at the "anti-reform reform" that's passing muster amongst conservatives.

These are indeed interesting times, and the closer we get to election day, the less certain I am as to the outcome. Don't get me wrong... I won't be surprised by ANYTHING that happens in this election. I've just seen too much in the past 20 years or so to think that there's anything that COULDN'T happen, know what I mean?

Well, I'm not going to preach and hammer at you too much about my opinions. Heck, I figure that if you're intelligent enough to understand my arguments, you already agree with me anyway. [Grin]

Then there’s the fact that what remains of Hurricane Hanna is preparing to kick some butt along the east coast. Everyone from South Carolina to Maine is watching this one, and it’s going to be a bumpy ride for just about everyone here. But at least it ain’t a full-blown hurricane anymore.

So that leaves the UseNet messages. We don’t have a huge number of messages, but I think we’ve got enough to kick around a bit. So let’s give it a shot, shall we?

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

Jean-Luc Ceccoli asks about BigDOS:

"I’m currently doing some testings, which need that I can use lfn straight from TOS.

This is only possible running a small utility named BigDos. Or, should I say, it ’ought’ to be possible.

Because the utility needs to be configured using another small utility named Setter, from HS-Modem package - yes, I know, that’s all remind everyone here very old memories.

The only problem is that all versions of setter I tried report the file being damaged or needing the use of a newer version of Setter.

The ugly thing is, that there is no newer version of setter than the one I found on the net - and that I already owned anyway -. Any idea about this?"

’Ppera’ tells Jean-Luc:

"BigDOS can work with max 2GB partitions. And itself supports not long filenames. So, you will not be happy with it. 4GB FAT16 is barely used, only under Win NT, as far as I know. Not much support for it.

By the way, BigDOS sets not all partitions as GEMDOS, only Big FAT16 partitions from >32MB and <2GB. Is it FAT16 for sure? Not FAT32?"

Jean-Luc replies:

"I need to access and modify many files with a software that only runs under plain TOS.

Those are lfn, with names that beginning is the same.
They represent about 3 GB total space for about 13000 files in something like 1700 folders and subfolders.

If I edit them under TOS, their names are truncated when saving.
One solution would be to rename them under MagiC!, then edit them under TOS, and them rename them again under MagiC!.

This would need to transfer some files to a partition that TOS can handle, then edit, and so on... it would take me ages before I have achieved a tenth of the job. And that can't be automated, because it's highly 'human-brain-dependent'.

From what I understood, if I let it as-is, BigDos will set all the partitions to GEMDOS type, and my need is to access one 4 GB lfn partition, which I think must be ISO-something.

Last time I tried to use BigDos - loooong time ago -, it corrupted my entire disk. I think, now, that was because it wasn't set up correctly. I don't want it to happen once again.

I own another utility named Setter.PRG (not TTP!).
When I used it first, I saw what I thought to be garbage. In fact, I just realized it actually displays the same strings as the TTP version, but with no CR - that is, the CRs are displayed as part of the string, as characters -.

Now, when I open BigDos and then double click on the first line, it opens a window with 3 x 4 fields.

What I don't understand, as it is to set up drives type, and as the accepted values are stated to be from -32768 to 32767 though there can only be 4 drives types (0 to 3), is how I must fill the fields.

Must I name the drive and then assign it a type, typing something like "D=1", "F=3", etc. Or must I assume that the first field is for the first drive and so on?"

Jean-Luc now asks about his Falcon with MiNT and an Eiffel board:

"I hope this issue will be the last one...
I use a PC keyboard via Eiffel on my FalCT60.
Under MiNT, despite KeyEdit, with which I created the Keyboard.tbl that I placed in c:/mint/1-16-cur/, it just behaves as a plain Falcon keyboard for Alt-chars, so I can't access them the way I used to before (when I ran MagiC!). Any idea what I should do to correct this?"

Jo Even Skarstein tells Jean-Luc:

"I don't know anything about Eiffel, but I've tested KeyEdit on a Falcon040 with a TT keyboard, running the current FreeMiNT kernel and Alt-keys work fine. The Eiffel interface is very configurable, I recommend studying the docs thoroughly."

Jean-Luc is on a roll this week, as he posts the next question also:

"I think I have some problems with time server. Though the clock in my computer displays the correct hour, the one displayed on the messages I post is shifted -1. I think this was due to the data in the config file for STiK.

I've currently changed for fr.pool.ntp.org, and I hope the hour for this post will be correct. Should this not be, could someone advice me a correct timeserver?

It’s obviously nothing to do with the timeserver that is declared into STiK’s config file. In everything I post, the hour is wrong (-1 hour), though the one displayed on the taskbar is right (as well as the one that fastly appears when booting).

So, it isn’t a matter of a timeserver, but something that isn’t set correctly. Unfortunately, I couldn’t find it so far. Any idea what I should look for - before I go nuts?"

Jean-Francois Lemaire asks Jean-Luc:

"What system? If SpareMiNT, you might have an incorrect timezone in /etc/sparemint/timezone. If not, I don’t know."

Jean-Luc replies:

"Er... it seems far more weird that I thought :
- the hour on my FalCT60 is correct (boot time, taskbar, aso.),
- the hour of a post I sent, when displayed by Troll, is -1, but
- the hour of the same post when I use Google groups is OK!
So... ??? Where do I have to search for?

[The system is] EasyMiNT. And I did zic -l Europe/Paris -p Europe/Paris after install."

Jean-Francois replies:

"asymint is an installer for Sparemint, so your system is really SpareMiNT. I think you need to edit the file /etc/sparemint/timezone before running the command you write above."

Jean-Luc tells Jean-Francois:

"Yes, of course, I didn’t mention it, but I did it before running the command. However, if I correctly understood the help text into the file, it says that it operates at install.

Anyway... the time displayed on my computer is OK, as well as the one reported when I read the posts straight from internet, and as well as the time of the mail I send. But, the time reported by Troll is wrong!

If someone can confirm that the time of this message is something near 23:57, then Troll is faulty, as it will display 22:57. Am I the only Troll user that noticed that? Or, am I the only one whom it happens to?"

Well folks, that’s it for this week. Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Heavily Hyped Spore Nears!
U.S. Xbox 360 Price Cut!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Heavily Hyped Spore Near Release With Big Expectations

Will Spore be the biggest thing to hit the gaming world since Doom? Electronic Arts dearly hopes so. The long-awaited game by Sims creator Will Wright has so much hype surrounding it that anything less than a home run will be a disappointment, say game-industry watchers.

Michael Pachter, an analyst with Wedbush Morgan Securities, told The Wall Street Journal that between the cost of developing the game and marketing it, EA needs to rake in $75 million with Spore. Pachter expects EA to sell two million copies by the end of the year.

Marketing the game, which comes out in Europe on Friday and the U.S. on Sunday, is a challenge for EA's marketers since the game seems to encompass the evolution of life on Earth from primordial stew to space exploration.

"If you told somebody you were going to be playing a game where you controlled life from a primordial soup to intergalactic travel and you have responsibility for the entire galaxy, that can seem like a pretty daunting task," Patrick Buechner, vice president of marketing for EA's Maxis unit, told the Journal.

EA is also making the game available online. In order to lighten the load on EA's download servers on launch day, the company is hoping customers will download (and pay for) the game now, even though it won't be operational until launch day. The download is expected to take 30 to 60 minutes.

EA isn't releasing a demo version of the game, but is offering software called the Spore Creature Creator, which allows users to create their own life forms for the Spore universe. The software has already been downloaded three million times, a pretty good indicator that the game is on track to generate the same worldwide appeal of The Sims.

And Creature Creator may be coming to a computer near you. Under a marketing deal with Hewlett-Packard, the PC giant will install the Spore software on new consumer-oriented desktops and laptops.

The scope of the game is nothing less than the evolution of humanity. "From tide pool amoebas to thriving civilizations to intergalactic starships, everything is in your hands," the promotional text says.

Creature Creator may serve as the hub of an entire Spore ecosystem, Wright told Wired.com during a visit earlier this year. "I might decide I want to just buy the trading card of my creature ... and never buy the PC game," he said. "So in some sense that free creature editor might become the hub of the franchise. The PC game is just one of the spokes off that hub."

Unlike immersive war games, Spore, while it may prove to be addictive, is a natural application for smartphones and other handheld devices. But for now, EA is focusing on the huge PC market. It is planning to release versions for cell phones and Nintendo's DS handheld system, but the company is mum on whether it will be available for gaming consoles like Microsoft's Xbox and Sony's PlayStation.

The game could have some smartphone potential, said Greg Sterling, principal analyst with Sterling Market Research, in a telephone interview. "While there's nothing new about being able to create your own characters, the ability to be futzing with your characters on a mobile device could be interesting," Sterling said. "The iPhone has emerged as a global gaming platform already."

Microsoft To Cut Xbox 360 U.S. Prices

Microsoft Corp plans to cut U.S. prices of its Xbox 360 video game machine, lowering the price of its entry-level console to $50 below Nintendo Co Ltd's top-selling Wii, BusinessWeek reported on Wednesday.

In an article on its website, the magazine said the company will cut prices for its entry-level Xbox 360 Arcade to $199 from its current price of $279. It plans to announce the price changes on Friday, the report said.

It will also cut the prices of its mid-range and high end Xbox 360 consoles by $50 each, according to BusinessWeek.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Video Added to Google Apps

Google is introducing video into Google Apps with the hope that companies will be attracted to a service that helps with training and internal communication but also removes the hassles of hosting video.

According to Google executives who spoke to CNET News last week, the search giant has tailored some of the technology developed by YouTube specifically for corporate clients. The offering is part of Google's continuing efforts to replace traditional office software with so-called cloud-computing services.

With the help of Google Video for Business, a company's employees can upload and share clips with the same ease as posting a clip to YouTube, according to Matt Glotzbach, Google's product manager director.

"Think of this as user-generated video for businesses," Glotzbach said.

A demo video provided to reporters illustrated the ways that Google employees use the service, which goes live to the public on Tuesday.

One Google executive said during the demo that instead of distributing an e-mail with a wrap-up of quarterly results to his team, he posted a clip of himself discussing the quarter. It was more personable than just sending an e-mail "especially for Google employees that work in remote offices" the video's narrator said.

The coolest feature by far is the Scene Browser, which presents a series of thumbnails that a user can click on to locate a specific segment within a video. It's slick and one has to wonder why it isn't offered on YouTube. Glotzbach said he didn't know for certain but speculated that it might be because YouTube's clips are generally shorter in length. Some of the service's other features enable administrators to track usage, and employees can leave comments, insert tags, and embed a video into any Web page. Companies control who sees the video because only authorized users are able to watch.

The service will be wrapped inside the Google Apps Premier Edition which costs $50 a year per user. For that price, each user receives all the Google Apps, such as Gmail, Docs, and Calendar.

Glotzbach said Google has an opportunity to cash in on corporate video, a segment that many predicted would one day be huge but has been too complicated and costly for wide adoption. For Gmail, the company offers 25GB per mailbox. For Google Video, the company offers 3GB per user.

Google is hoping that companies will flock to a service that doesn't require them to host servers or worry about huge amounts of data. This is a bottom's up approach, according to Glotzbach. It used to be that companies were willing only to pay for high-level executives to make videos for internal communication, but Google Video for Business enables a company to allow employees at any level to distribute video content.

Dell Set To Unveil Mini-Notebook Computer

Dell Inc is poised to announce a new mini-laptop computer later this week, a source familiar with the company's plan said on Tuesday, confirming a Wall Street Journal story.

The source said the Dell "mini" would be a low-priced computer that is two-thirds the size of full-featured laptops, which will put it into competition with the Eee PC from Asustek Computer and other rivals in

Taiwan and Japan.

The Journal cited "people familiar with the device" as saying the Dell mini notebook is likely to sell for under $400, have a screen size under nine inches, and run either Microsoft Windows or Linux operating system software.

A Dell spokeswoman was not immediately available to comment. The source confirmed that the new Dell model would be revealed on Thursday as part of an announcement with partner Box.net, which supplies online data storage services to Dell.

Mini-notebooks have caught on with heavy computer users who want full-access not just to e-mail but to Web pages and business documents while on the go outside of their offices.

Google Polishes Product Line with Chrome Browser

The new Web browser that Google Inc. released Tuesday is designed to expand its huge lead in the Internet search market and reduce Microsoft Corp.’s imprint on personal computers.

The free browser, called "Chrome," is being promoted as a sleeker, faster, safer and reliable alternative to Microsoft’s Internet Explorer, which has been the leading vehicle for surfing the Web for the past decade. Despite recent inroads by Mozilla Foundation’s Firefox, Internet Explorer is still used by roughly three-fourths of the world’s Web surfers.

"What we want is a diverse and vibrant ecosystem," Google co-founder Sergey Brin told reporters Tuesday during Chrome’s unveiling. "We want several browsers that are viable and substantial choices."

Among other features, Chrome’s navigation bar - where you type in an Internet address - will serve a dual purpose. Users can either enter an address into the space or type a search request that will be processed through their search engine of choice.

Naturally, Google bets it will be the default search engine for the majority of Chrome users, helping to build upon its nearly 64 percent share of the worldwide search market.

"You only have 24 hours a day and we would like you to do more searches," Google’s other co-founder, Larry Page, said at the unveiling. "If the browser runs well, then you will do more searches."

Google also is counting on Chrome to become the linchpin in its effort to distribute widely used computer programs like word processing, spreadsheets and calendars through the Web browser instead of as applications installed on individual machines. If the crusade is successful, it might undercut Microsoft’s profits by diminishing sales of its Office software package.

"Chrome will strengthen the Web as the biggest application platform in the world," predicted Jon von Tetzchner, chief executive of the company that makes the Opera browser, which ranks a distant fourth in the market.

Microsoft, which crushed Netscape Communications to win the last major browser war in the 1990s, played down the threat posed by Chrome. Microsoft predicted that most people will embrace its latest version, Internet Explorer 8, which it released in test status last week.

But Benchmark Co. analyst Brent Williams thinks Microsoft has cause for concern. In a Tuesday research note, Williams described Chrome as a "a new, potentially significant, challenge to Microsoft's Web strategy and to (Microsoft's) core product suite, and indeed to (Microsoft's) business model."

Chrome may lure even more users from Firefox, which has grabbed more than 10 percent of the browser market with the help of an advertising and search alliance with Google. The ad partnership was recently extended through 2011.

Because Chrome and Google both are built on similar "open-source" models that share computer coding with outside developers to foster innovation, the products are likely to appeal to similar subsets of Web surfers looking for alternatives to Internet Explorer.

"If there is a casualty in the browser wars, it's likely to be Mozilla's Firefox," the Info-Tech Research Group predicted Tuesday.

Executives at Google - which spent two years developing Chrome - emphasized that they wouldn't have been able to build Chrome without the inroads already made by Firefox, and expressed hope that the two browsers will incorporate the best features from both products.

"I hope big chunks of Chrome make it into the next generation of Firefox," Brin said.

In a blog posting, Mozilla CEO John Lilly said he had been expecting Google to enter the browser market for some time and predicted that Firefox would continue to hold its own.

"It should come as no real surprise that Google has done something here - their business is the Web, and they've got clear opinions on how things should be, and smart people thinking about how to make things better," Lilly wrote.

Comcast Appeals FCC Web Traffic-Blocking Decision

Comcast Corp. is appealing an FCC ruling that the company is improperly blocking customers' Web traffic, triggering a legal battle that could determine the extent of the government's authority to regulate the Internet.

In a precedent-setting move, a divided Federal Communications Commission last month determined that the company is violating a federal policy that guarantees unfettered access to the Internet.

Comcast challenged the FCC decision Thursday in the U.S. District Court of Appeals in Washington.

Comcast executive vice president David L. Cohen said in a statement that the company is seeking "review and reversal" of the FCC order and that

the commission’s action was "legally inappropriate and its findings were not justified by the record."

The Comcast case arose from complaints by users of a type of "file-sharing" software often used to download large data files, usually video.

Tests by The Associated Press and others found that file-sharing transmissions were aborting prematurely. It was later discovered that the company was cutting off transfers without informing customers.

The FCC noted Comcast’s network management practices were "discriminatory and arbitrary" and that the company’s practices "contravene industry standards and have significantly impeded Internet users’ ability to use applications and access content of their choice."

The agency also noted that the type of traffic Comcast is blocking has become "a competitive threat" to cable operators because it is used by people to view high-quality video that they "might otherwise watch (and pay for) on cable television."

While the FCC action did not include a fine, it does require Comcast within 30 days to disclose the details of its "discriminatory network management"; submit a compliance plan describing how it intends to stop these practices by the end of the year; and disclose to customers and the commission its new plan.

Cohen said Thursday that the company will comply with the FCC’s order. Prior to the FCC action, the company had said it will switch to a management technique that treats all users the same by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, a public interest law firm representing two consumer groups and a California company that benefits from the type of file-sharing software targeted by Comcast filed appeals in New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

The legal challenges, filed last week, ask the court to force Comcast to cease its management practices immediately rather than by the end of the year.

The actions were more likely an attempt to avoid the District of Columbia court circuit, which is perceived as friendly to industry. If the cases are consolidated, the venue will be decided by lottery.

The plaintiffs are Consumers Union, in Yonkers, N.Y.; PennPIRG in Philadelphia; and Vuze Inc. of Redwood City, Calif. They are represented by the Media Access Project in Washington.

Comcast has said that it has delayed traffic, not blocked it; and that the FCC’s so-called network-neutrality "principles" are part of a policy statement and not enforceable rules.

The FCC action came about in response to a complaint filed by public interest group Free Press and others.

Since the FCC vote, Comcast has announced that beginning Oct. 1, it would institute a broadband usage cap of 250 gigabytes per month for all residential customers. Comcast says to exceed that limit a customer would have to send 50 million e-mails or download 125

standard-definition movies.

Sony Recalls About 438,000 Vaio Laptops

Updated 8:13 AM PTD: Added the number of recalled laptops worldwide. Sony is recalling about 438,000 Vaio TZ-series notebooks worldwide that may overheat and cause burns, the company said Thursday.

The number of recalled laptops sold in the United States is 72,800, a Sony spokesman said.

According to a statement issued by Sony and the Consumer Products Safety Commission, the problem is related to irregularly positioned wires near the computer's hinge and/or a dislodged screw inside the hinge, which can cause a short circuit and overheating.

The problem affects the Vaio VGN-TZ100 series, VGN-TZ200 series, VGN-TZ300 series, and VGN-TZ2000 series, which were sold through the SonyStyle stores and Web site, as well as electronics retailers, as well as authorized business-to-business dealers nationwide from July 2007 through August 2008 for between $1,700 and $4,000.

Sony has received 15 reports of overheating, including one consumer who suffered a minor burn. The company said it would inspect and repair affected computers, if needed.

Consumers are advised to contact Sony toll-free at 888-526-6219 or visit the company's support Web page.

In 2006, Sony had to conduct a multimillion-dollar battery recall due to overheating issues.

Google Reigns As World's Most Powerful 10-Year-Old

When Larry Page and Sergey Brin founded Google Inc. on Sept. 7, 1998, they had little more than their ingenuity, four computers and an investor's $100,000 bet on their belief that an Internet search engine could change the world.

It sounded preposterous 10 years ago, but look now: Google draws upon a gargantuan computer network, nearly 20,000 employees and a $150 billion market value to redefine media, marketing and technology.

Perhaps Google's biggest test in the next decade will be finding a way to pursue its seemingly boundless ambitions without triggering a backlash that derails the company.

"You can't do some of the things that they are trying to do without eventually facing some challenges from the government and your rivals," said Danny Sullivan, who has followed Google since its inception and is now editor-in-chief of SearchEngineLand.

Google's expanding control over the flow of Internet traffic and advertising already is raising monopoly concerns.

The intensifying regulatory and political scrutiny on Google’s expansion could present more roadblocks in the future. Even now, there’s a chance U.S. antitrust regulators will challenge Google’s plans to sell ads for Yahoo Inc., a fading Internet star whose recent struggles have been magnified by Google’s success.

Privacy watchdogs also have sharpened their attacks on Google’s retention of potentially sensitive information about the 650 million people who use its search engine and other Internet services like YouTube, Maps and Gmail. If the harping eventually inspires rules that restrict Google’s data collection, it could make its search engine less relevant and its ad network less profitable.

To protect its interests, Google has hired lobbyists to bend the ears of lawmakers and ramped up its public relations staff to sway opinion as management gears up to conquer new frontiers.

"Google will keep pushing the envelope," predicted John Battelle, who wrote a book about the company and now runs Federated Media, a conduit for Internet publishers and advertisers. "It’s one of the things that seems to make them happy."

In the latest example of its relentless expansion, Google has just released a Web browser to make its search engine and other online services even more accessible and appealing. Not every peripheral step has gone smoothly, though; several of the company’s ancillary products have flopped or never lived up to the hype.

Extending Google’s ubiquity to cell phones and other mobile devices sits at the top of management’s agenda for the next decade.

But the lengthy to-do list also includes: making digital copies of all the world’s books; establishing electronic file cabinets for people’s health records; leading the alternative energy charge away from fossil fuels; selling computer programs to businesses over the Internet; and tweaking its search engine so it can better understand requests stated in plain language, just like a human would.

"There are people who think we are plenty full of ourselves right now, but from inside at least, it doesn’t look that way," said Craig Silverstein, Google’s technology director and the first employee hired by Page and Brin. "I think what keeps us humble is realizing how much further we have to go."

Page and Brin, both 35 now and worth nearly $19 billion apiece, declined to be interviewed for this story. But they have never left any doubt they view Google as a force for good - a philosophy punctuated by their corporate motto: "Don’t Be Evil."

"If we had a lightsaber, we would be Luke (Skywalker)," Silverstein said.

A "Star Wars" analogy can just as easily be used to depict Google as an imposing empire. It holds commanding leads in both the Internet search and advertising markets. The company processes nearly two-thirds of the world’s online search requests, according to the research firm comScore Inc., and sells about three-fourths of the ads tied to search requests, according to another firm, eMarketer Inc.

The dominance has enabled Google to rake in $48 billion from Internet

ads since 2001. Google hasn’t hoarded all of that money: the company has paid $15 billion in commissions to the Web sites that run its ads during the same period, helping to support major online destinations like AOL, Ask.com and MySpace as well as an array of bloggers.

"Google is the oxygen in this ecosystem," Battelle said.

The company hopes to inhale even more Internet advertising from the biggest deal in its short history - a $3.2 billion acquisition of online marketing service DoubleClick Inc. that was completed six months ago.

Google also is trying to mine more money from its second-largest acquisition, YouTube, the Internet’s leading video channel. YouTube is expected to generate about $200 million in revenue this year, an amount that analysts believe barely scratches the video site’s moneymaking potential.

Eventually, Google Chairman Eric Schmidt wants the entire company to generate $100 billion in annual revenue, which would make it roughly as big as the two largest information-technology companies - Hewlett-Packard Co. and IBM Corp. - each are now. This year, Google will surpass the $20 billion threshold for the first time.

Schmidt, 53, who became Google’s CEO in 2001, seems determined to stick around to reach his goal. He, Brin and Page have made an informal pact to remain the company’s brain trust through 2024, at least.

But some rivals are determined to thwart Google. TV and movie conglomerate Viacom Inc. is suing Google for $1 billion for alleged copyright infringement at YouTube, while Microsoft signaled how desperately it wants to topple Google by offering to buy Yahoo for $47.5 billion this year.

Microsoft withdrew the takeover bid in a dispute over Yahoo’s value, but some analysts still think those two companies may get together if they fall farther behind Google.

The notion that Microsoft - the richest technology company - would spend so much time worrying about Google seemed inconceivable in September 1998, when Page and Brin decided to convert their research project in Stanford University’s computer science graduate program into a formal company.

Page, a University of Michigan graduate, and Brin, a University of Maryland alum, began working on a search engine - originally called BackRub - in 1996 because they believed a lot of important content wasn’t being found on the Web. At the time, the companies behind the Internet’s major search engines - Yahoo, AltaVista and Excite - were increasingly focused on building multifaceted Web sites.

Internet search was considered such a low priority at the time that Page and Brin couldn’t even find anyone willing to pay a couple of million dollars to buy their technology. Instead, they got a $100,000 investment from one of Sun Microsystems Inc.’s co-founders, Andy Bechtolsheim, and filed incorporation papers so they could cash a check made out to Google Inc. In a nod to their geeky roots as children of computer science and math professors, Page and Brin had derived the name from the mathematical term "googol" - a 1 followed by 100 zeros.

Later they would raise a total of about $26 million from family, friends

and venture capitalists to help fund the company and pay for now-famous employee perks like free meals and snacks.

Even after Google became an official company in 1998, the business continued to operate out of the founders' Stanford dorm rooms.

Like Google's stripped-down home page, the company itself had a bare-bones aesthetic. Page's room was converted into a "server farm" for the three computers that ran the search engine, which then processed about 10,000 requests per day compared with about 1.5 billion per day now. The headquarters were in Brin's room in a neighboring dorm hall, where the founders and Silverstein wrestled for control of another computer to bang out programming code.

Within a few weeks after incorporating, Google moved into the garage of a Menlo Park, Calif., home owned by Susan Wojcicki, who became a Google executive and is now Brin's sister-in-law (Google bought the house in 2006). Even back in 1998, there was some free food - usually bags of M&Ms and Silverstein's homemade bread.

Jump back to today: The company occupies a 1.5 million-square-foot headquarters called the "Googleplex" - as well as two dozen other U.S. offices and hubs in more than 30 other countries. And its search engine - believed to index at least 40 billion Web pages - now runs on hundreds of thousands of computers kept in massive data centers around the world.

The growth dumbfounds Silverstein, whose only goal when he started was to help make Google successful enough to employ 80 people.

"It's natural when a company gets big that some people become fearful of that," Silverstein said. "All we can do is to be as upfront and straightforward as possible. We are not trying to be malicious or have some sneaky plan to put you in our thrall. There are some people who will never believe that."

A glimpse at what Google looked like in 1998:

http://web.archive.org/web/19981111183552/google.stanford.edu

Google's philosophy:

http://www.google.com/corporate/tenthings.html

Internet Traffic Grows 53 Percent from Mid-2007

International Internet traffic kept growing in the last year, but at a slower rate than before, and carriers more than kept pace by adding more capacity, a research firm said Wednesday.

The findings by TeleGeography Research are important because some U.S. Internet service providers say they are struggling with the expansion of online traffic, and are imposing monthly download limits on heavy users. The figures from TeleGeography don't exactly correlate to average Internet usage by U.S. households, but give an indication of wider trends.

TeleGeography said traffic grew 53 percent from mid-2007 to mid-2008,

down from a growth rate of 61 percent in the previous 12 months.

Growth on long-haul lines in the U.S. was even slower, at 47 percent. The big increase came in regions where the Internet is less mature. Traffic between the U.S. and Latin America more than doubled.

Meanwhile, international Internet capacity on ocean-spanning optical fibers increased 62 percent. On average, Internet traffic now uses just 29 percent of the available bandwidth.

TeleGeography research director Alan Mauldin noted that the number of new broadband subscribers has been falling since 2001, but that the overall increase in Internet traffic remains high because of the increasing demand for online video.

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